



File Code: 1910-2-4/2830

Date: November 3, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

The Black Hills National Forest (Forest) seeks your input on the Inyan Kara and Jewel Cave mineral withdrawals. The Forest proposes to withdraw two areas of National Forest System (NFS) lands from mineral location and entry under the General Mining Law. The purpose of this proposed action is to protect significant natural and cultural resources that are not compatible with mining activities.

The Inyan Kara withdrawal area includes approximately 1,278.09 acres of NFS lands located near Inyan Kara Mountain in Township 49 North, Range 62 West and Range 63 West, Crook County, Wyoming. This withdrawal is proposed to protect significant historic and prehistoric cultural resources. Approximately 440 acres of the Inyan Kara withdrawal area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Inyan Kara Mountain is a sacred site to American Indians.

The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Plan) emphasizes management of Inyan Kara for its unique historical and geologic characteristics. Uses that might impair historical or educational values are prohibited, and this area is specifically identified to be withdrawn from mineral entry (pg. III-24). The Plan also contains objectives to facilitate traditional and spiritual uses on the Forest.

The Jewel Cave withdrawal area includes approximately 4,696.59 acres of NFS lands in the vicinity of Jewel Cave National Monument (Cave) located in Township 4 South, Range 3 East, Custer County, South Dakota. This withdrawal is proposed to protect existing cave resources including caverns of great scientific and public interest. Recent exploration of the Cave has established that cave passages and caverns extend at least one mile beyond the current withdrawal area. The Plan (pg. II-15) requires protection of Jewel Cave from mineral entry and prohibits surface occupancy or disturbance for mining or mineral lease operations.

These withdrawals would prohibit future exploration for and development of locatable minerals in these two areas and prevent disturbance from mining activities. Private inholdings will not be withdrawn.

Available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills> are maps of the two proposed withdrawal areas. A Comment Form for your use in sending any comments or concerns that might help us in our analysis of this project is also on the website and is enclosed with this letter. Please return your comments or suggestions concerning this project by December 5, 2004 to Alice Allen, Hell Canyon Ranger District, 330 Mt. Rushmore Road, Custer, SD 57730. If you would like additional information, please contact Allen at (605) 673-4853 or aaallen@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

BRAD EXTON
Acting Forest Supervisor

